# What's New With Community Engagement Team (CET) Outreach Work?

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<u>CET Team</u>: from l to r; t to b Marlinia Antoine, Rabeya Akther, Maria Chavez, Seble Kidane, Lina Harp, Jamila El Hamdouni, Carrine Bury, Tagasech Wabeto, Christopher Hope

The Community Engagement Team is a multi-agency collaborative that reaches out to underserved Cambridge families and connects them to community events and resources, develops community leaders, and supports agencies in working with a diverse community.

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  (Summer activities)

#### Dear Reader,

As the hot summer sun rise, we welcome the new changes that have taken place at the Community Engagement Team (CET). This year our goal was to reach out 450 families. In order to reach this goal we have welcomed new CET members to our team. We have also created new partnership with Cambridge Public Schools and other community agencies.

In this newsletter, you will be introduced to our new members and the job that they do. In addition, we've included an update on the work of all CET Outreach workers.

We are only a few weeks from summer so we thought it important to share with you some good tips on why it is important to keep your kids active when they are out of school and what we family activities we have planned for the upcoming summer months.

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www.cambridgema.gov/DHSP/programsforadults/CET.aspx

## What I learned from a Community Engagement Team Outreach Worker.

#### **Parent Story**

My name is Addis Fitne. I came, with my husband and our child, from Ethiopia in 2008.

Upon arrival to the United States we were very eager to learn about the community. Our needs were plenty since we were new to the culture. While we were in this overwhelming and confusing period we learned about an Ethiopian outreach worker who speaks English as well as Amharic. We were excited to find someone who understand us and will be able to help us get the much-needed information on how to go in about our day-to-day life.

We called the Ethiopian outreach worker, Mrs. Seble and she was very warm and happy to meet with us. We met with Seble and discussed about our needs and she promised to gather all the necessary information and come to our residence. As promised, Seble came to our home with lots of important information for each and every one of the family members.

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#### MEET THE NEW MEMBERS OF THE TEAM: OUTREACH WORKERS BIOS

#### **Marlinia Antoine**



My name is Marlinia Frederic Antoine. I was born in Haiti. I worked as a Bilingual Medical Secretary for 10 years at a state hospital. I have twin boys, 13 years old. I came to the USA with my family in January 2010, after the earthquake. I took some English classes in West Palm Beach, Florida at the Adult Education Center, where I also volunteered in the media center. In July 2012, I moved to Boston and went to the Bridge program at the Community Learning Center; I won a scholarship and enrolled in Bunker Hill Community College. I am majoring in nursing. Now, I am a CET outreach worker for Haitian families in Cambridge.

#### **Maria Chavez**



Hi, my name is Maria P. Chavez and I was born and raised from the part of the Caribbean called the Dominican Republic. I acquired a post -secondary education in accounting and finance before coming to the U.S. I am currently enrolled in the Harvard Extension Program to strengthen my English. I also volunteered in Rosie's place shelter in Boston. Being a new CET outreach worker to the Spanish speaking community has provided me with an astonishing opportunity to enhance my community with the various resources that Cambridge offers. I intend to use my strong advocacy abilities to help Latino families in the community and anyone else in need.

Lina Harp



My name is Lina Harp. I am from Taiwan and speak three languages: Mandarin, Taiwanese, and English. I have lived in the United States for 12 years. I lived for three years in Brooklyn, NY and the rest of the time in Cambridge. I earned a B.A. from Tam Jiang University in Taipei, majoring in Business Administration and Internal Trade. I joined the Community Engagement Team in January 2014 to reach out to underserved Chinese families. I have two daughters, ages 13 and seven, both attend Cambridge Public Schools.

Jamila El Hamdouni



My name is Jamila El Hamdouni. I am a CET Outreach Worker for Arabic families. I was born and raised in Morocco. I graduated as a Certified Computer Technician from Ecole Superiour Informatique Aplication (E.S.I.A.) in Casa Blanca, Morocco. I had worked as an Assistant Manager of Human Resources Department for five years before I came to the United States. I have been living in United States since 2001. I took English Classes at the Community Learning Center (CLC). And I am very grateful to the CLC because of them I have improved my English. I am married and I have two children.

#### **Update on Work of CET Outreach Workers**

Since July the CET Outreach Workers have been very busy!

Four additional outreach workers were hired. CET has nine outreach workers (American-Born Black, Bangladeshi, Chinese, Egyptian, two Haitian, two Ethiopian, one Latino)

From July 2013 to March 2014 the outreach workers helped 689 parents attend community events or services. Of those parents, 307 attended a community event or service for the first time!

The outreach workers organized 43 parent workshops that they give in their native languages.

Outreach Workers also completed two special projects.

- 1. They collected <u>102</u> Community Health Access Surveys and organized three focus groups, <u>30</u> participants attended.
- 2. They organized three focus groups on Let's Talk About Physical Activity, <u>24</u> parents attended.

For the first time, CET outreach workers have been hired by Cambridge Public Schools to help schools communicate better with immigrant parents.

The outreach workers shared school information with more than 800 parents of children in Cambridge Public Schools. 173 parents attended school events. Of those parents 96 attended a school event for the first time!

CET outreach workers also helped Cambridge schools with some special projects. They:

- Assisted Language Immersion Programs with recruitment
- Recruited parents to attend the K-8 Parenting Workshop Series
- Assisted Office of Student Services with outreach to immigrant families about Basic Rights and Special Education
- Contacting parents about kindergarten open houses
- Informed parents about the changes to the middle school math program

CET Outreach Workers are very excited about all the work they do and feel rewarded by knowing they have helped so many immigrant families become part of and participate in the Cambridge community.

#### What I learned from a Community Engagement Team Outreach Worker (continued from cover)

#### **Parent Story**

Seble gave us the information about Agenda for Children service how it is important reading to our child at an early age and recommended that we sign up. She also advised us when our son reached 1 and ½ years old to join the home based program in Cambridge

She motivated my husband and I to register at the Community Learning Center so we that we can learn English and be able to communicate well and blend into our new society. She also gave us information's about the Cambridge Housing Authority.

We have now grown our family members to 4. Seble had also helped us to register in the Pathways program. Both my children and I are enjoying the Pathways program every Saturday.

So far we have been actively involved in all the community events. We have also benefitted from the parenting workshop that has been taught and organized by Seble. This event has been very important as Seble speaks to us in our own language as well us in simple English.

All this benefit has come mainly due to meeting Seble, My family and I are very appreciative and grateful for all the services that are offered in Cambridge City and we would like to say thank you to the City of Cambridge and to Seble for helping us settle in our new home.

## Did you know that learning depends on keeping children active?

A healthy lifestyle means exercising the mind and body. This involves making time to read, play, sing and exercise as a family. Summertime shouldn't mean taking a break from learning, especially reading. Studies show that most students experience a loss of reading skills over the summer months, but children who continue to read actually increase their reading level, language and thinking skills, and vocabulary.

Summer shouldn't be a stay at home time. There are so many things to do with children in the summer that you can limit screen time to one hour per day.

For example, if you live in a safe neighborhood, allow your children to play outside with friends. Take the dog for a walk as a family. If your kids are old enough, make them responsible for exercising the dog.

#### Try different activities until you find something that your children enjoy.

The parks in Cambridge are a great place to let the children play, meet friends and learn. Many of the parks have water play areas, arts and crafts activities, and movies in the early evening with free popcorn!

The Cambridge Recreation Department has activities for children of all ages. The Center for Families newsletter has lists of activities available on the weekends. The Cambridge Public Library is a great resource for summer reading. Also, through the libraries, you can get museum passes to many different museums for free or a reduced cost!

Summer camp is another thing to involve your children in to keep their minds and bodies active.

Find out what is available in your area and encourage your child (and yourself) to try something new.

Where to find more information about summer programs:

www/cambridgema.gov/DHSP/programsforfamilies.aspx

www/cambridgema.gov/cpl.aspx

www/cambridgema.gov/DHSP/programsforfamilies/summercamps.aspx

www/cambridgema.gov/CDD/parks.aspx

### **FAMILY GATHERING**

Please join us for a family gathering on Tuesday, August 26<sup>th</sup> (rain date August 28<sup>th</sup>). We will gather at Danehy Park for food, fun and to share experiences working with the CET outreach workers.

